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### **15 Community Collaboratives Selected for myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives launched by ncIMPACT Initiative**

The UNC School of Government's [ncIMPACT Initiative](#) announces the selection of 15 community collaboratives to an inaugural cohort working to better align their education systems with the needs of their regional economy, in partnership with [myFutureNC](#). This intensive two-year project will position the cohort to significantly increase the number of individuals with postsecondary degrees, credentials, or certificates of value in the workforce. It aligns with the [state's legislative goal](#) of 2 million individuals between the ages of 25-44 who possess a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030. Funding was provided by the John M. Belk Endowment, Dogwood Health Trust and UNC Rural.

"These collaboratives offer an organized way to respond to future of work challenges that no single institution or even an entire sector can effectively tackle," said Anita Brown-Graham, UNC-Chapel Hill professor and director of the ncIMPACT Initiative. "We are eager to begin this important work together."

Each team, or "*collaborative*," may cover an individual county, a municipal-county partnership, or a multi-county region. The 15 selected collaboratives are led by the organizations identified below and serve the counties listed:

- Cape Fear Workforce Development Board (Brunswick, Columbus, Pender, New Hanover);
- Central Carolina Community College (Chatham, Harnett, Lee);
- Central Piedmont Community College (Mecklenburg);
- Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board (Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, Wayne);
- Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro (Guilford);
- HIGHTS, INC (Jackson, Macon, Swain);
- Land of Sky Regional Council (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Transylvania);
- Made in Durham (Durham);

- McDowell County Schools (McDowell);
- Elizabeth City State University (Pasquotank);
- Sampson Community College (Sampson);
- Strategic Twin Counties Education Partnership (STEP) (Edgecombe, Nash);
- Surry Community College (Surry, Yadkin);
- Wingate University (Anson, Union); and
- Work in Burke (Burke).

Each participating community will benefit from: Five regional forums at which teams will establish goals, identify strategies, set plans for implementation, collaborate across sectors, and learn from experts; technical assistance support throughout the process; \$15,000 to assist with the costs of hiring a community project manager; \$10,000 in implementation funding for the project; evidence-based resources that respond to immediate learning loss concerns and prepare for longer-term planning; and a Local Attainment Collaborative Toolkit to implement and sustain demand-informed local collaboration with regional employers. The myFutureNC field-based regional impact managers will serve these collaboratives in partnership with ncIMPACT, as well as other communities across the state so they are positioned to join a future cohort of collaboratives.

"Building a strong talent pipeline will require a new level of cross-sector coordination," said Cecilia Holden, president of myFutureNC. "Among others, key strategic partners in these collaboratives must include PreK-12, universities, community colleges, workforce development boards, economic developers, chambers of commerce, county commissioners, policymakers, and civic leaders. And most critical to the overall success is ensuring decisions are being made based on data and research, and the voice of communities, businesses, industries, and employers is in the center of these important conversations."

The cohort was selected from 46 applications spanning 82 counties of North Carolina. The selection committee sought to deliver a cohort with regional, economic, and demographic diversity; demonstrated community commitment; prior experience with educational attainment efforts; and identified barriers to educational attainment in the community. The ncIMPACT Initiative will manage this first cohort of collaboratives. myFutureNC will leverage the model developed through this cohort to identify and support additional collaboratives moving forward. Communities interested in updates and resources offered during this two-year project may visit: [bit.ly/LEAC-project](https://bit.ly/LEAC-project).

The ncIMPACT Initiative (ncIMPACT) is a statewide initiative launched by the UNC School of Government in 2017 to help local communities use data and evidence to improve conditions and inform decision making. Visit [ncimpact.org](https://ncimpact.org).

myFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit focused on educational attainment that includes some of North Carolina's most influential education, business, and civic leaders. The organization was formed with the goal to create a stronger, more competitive North Carolina. myFutureNC is working across sectors and in communities throughout the state to close gaps in the education pathway, to promote alignment

between educational programming and business/industry needs, and to ultimately improve educational opportunities for all North Carolinians. Visit [myfuturenc.org](http://myfuturenc.org).

The John M. Belk Endowment is a private family foundation committed to transforming postsecondary educational opportunities to meet North Carolina’s evolving workforce needs. Its mission is aligned with the vision of its founder, the late John M. Belk, who served four terms as mayor of Charlotte and was CEO of the department store company Belk, Inc. Now led by Mr. Belk’s daughter, MC Belk Pilon, the John M. Belk Endowment continues to partner with innovative, results-oriented programs in North Carolina to further Mr. Belk’s values, legacy, and focus on the value of education as a means to personal fulfillment and community vitality. For more information, please visit [imbendowment.org](http://imbendowment.org).

Dogwood Health Trust is a private foundation based in Asheville, North Carolina with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and well-being of all people and communities of 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust was created from the net proceeds of the sale of Mission Hospital System and focuses on innovative and equitable ways to address the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellness, with a focus on housing, education, economic opportunity, and access to care and health resources. Dogwood Health Trust works to create a Western North Carolina where every generation can live, learn, earn, and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all, no exceptions. To learn more, please visit [dht.org](http://dht.org).

The Provost's Office at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill established UNC Rural in 2019 to help align, promote, and support partnerships between the university and rural communities across North Carolina. UNC Rural offers a coordinated and collaborative space for resources, discussion, and connection to inform, share, highlight and connect around rural engagement partnerships that benefit communities. Visit [go.unc.edu/UNCRural](http://go.unc.edu/UNCRural) to learn more.

